

M e m o r a n d u m

To: JOHN THOMAS
ENVIRONMENTAL GENERALIST
EASTERN SIERRA ENVIRONMENTAL BRANCH

Date: 04-17-12

File: 09-MNO-395
PM 52.3/53.7
EA 09-335000
#: 09-0002-0002-0

From: ANGELA CALLOWAY *AC*
DISTRICT 9 PQS:CO-PI-PA
EASTERN SIERRA ENVIRONMENTAL BRANCH

Subject: CULTURAL CLEARANCE- LEE VINING ROCKFALL

Caltrans District 9 Design Engineering is preparing a project to minimize rockfall along US Highway 395 in Mono County between post miles 52.3 and 53.7 to improve public safety and reduce maintenance personnel's exposure to rockfall. This project will address six cut slopes which produce rockfall into the traveled way. No paved shoulder or roadway widening will be required, all work will be completed on the west side of the highway, and staging will be available at the Caltrans maintenance facility in Lee Vining. An undetermined amount of new right-of-way is anticipated at all slopes.

This project will reduce rockfall at slopes 1-3 by methods of scaling along with laying back to a lesser slope inclination of 1.5:1 and applying erosion control or applying a revegetative strategy only to the existing slope. Slopes 4-5 will reduce rockfall by methods of rock scaling and the utilization of a combination of drapery with attenuators and/or anchored mesh. And slope 6 will reduce rockfall by methods of rock scaling and anchored mesh. This will create a more uniform surface than what exists now and will more effectively promote the long term establishment of applied erosion control measures; this will further promote long term slope stability and decreased rockfall. There is also a no-build alternative at all slopes.

A field review was conducted on November 17, 2011 of the proposed Environmental Study Area which primarily extends within the disturbed and maintained portion of the right-of-way (ROW) with the exception of slope areas where additional ROW will be acquired. The study area for this project has been investigated by three previous Caltrans projects including Mono Lake Shoulder Widening Project in 2001 (HPSR submitted by John Sharp) and TEA investigations completed in 1998 (report submitted by Basgall and Richman) and 2010 (report submitted by Leach-Palm). A "spot survey" was conducted during the field review in areas extending outside the current ROW that could be safely accessed. The terrain near slopes proposed for work (also areas where new ROW will be

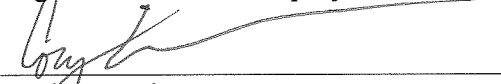
acquired) was generally extremely steep with a 40 degree slope gradient or greater. Brush was also dense and impenetrable at some locations as well. No cultural resources were observed, nor have any resources been previously recorded within the ESL, including construction staging areas. A records search determined that archaeological sites were located above the ESL to the west and these sites were visited to verify location and distance from ESL. Engineers have concluded that slope work will not be accessed from locations above the ESL to the west where archaeological sites are located.

Based on this review, I have determined that the proposed project will have no potential to affect historic properties, and is exempt from further review pursuant to Stipulation VII and Attachment 2 (Class #11: modification of existing features, such as slopes, ditches, curbs, sidewalks, driveways, dikes, or headwalls, within or adjacent to the right of way; Class #27: right-of-way activities such as hardship acquisition or acquisition of scenic or conservation easements) of the *Programmatic Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the California State Historic Preservation Officer, and the California Department of Transportation Regarding Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, As It Pertains To The Administration Of The Federal-Aid Highway Program In California* (PA).

Please note that this assessment could change if there are any changes to the proposed activities, or if additional locations are needed. If there are any such changes to the proposed project, an additional review by the cultural resources unit will be required.

If you have any further questions please contact me at (760) 872-0692/Calnet 8-627-0692.

I agree with the above project description.



Design Engineer

Attachment
C: Arch/HRC File; PA File